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A SATISFACTORY NURSES' HOME

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In 1913, a second house was built for the Massachusetts General nurses and still goes by the name of "The New Home." It was planned to accommodate one hundred nurses and to be "home" for them. To this end, therefore, the exterior was made simple, dignified and plain, and care and thought were taken to make the interior comfortable, attractive and, as far as possible, homelike. To anyone who has lived for any length of time in dormitories, it will be plain that this is not an easy thing to accomplish. Where so many are living together, there is bound to be a wide diversity of tastes, many of which, of course, cannot be gratified; but in the main the necessary things that all will agree upon are these: privacy, a place where one may keep her personal belongings and also be able to care for them, a place for relaxation and a chance to satisfy one's social instincts. These main points were considered in the construction of the New Home and it is my pleasure to point out to you in how large a measure they have been successful.

The house consists of four floors, a basement and a roof. It is situated directly across the street from the hospital's administration building and occupies the whole of a small block. It is connected with the hospital by means of an underground passage, the advantage of which is obvious. The building faces north and is so planned that the lavatories and toilet rooms are on the north side, while bedrooms extend around the east, south and west sides, thus insuring the entrance of sunlight into each bedroom at some time during the course of the day.

In the basement are two good trunk rooms, utility rooms for the storage of barrels, etc., and a classroom, where the nurses have their theoretical work, the essential features of which are good blackboard space and an ample closet. The classroom for the practical work is in the other nurses' home. The diet laboratory in the accompanying picture (Fig. 1) was a later development and occupies a building of its own, but might well be incorporated in a home for nurses. The basement likewise contains three other rooms which have been fitted up for the comfort of the nurses. The first of these, a sewing room, contains all the requisites for sewing; shears of different sizes, a skirt hanger, a cutting table, a long table, a sewing machine, and a figure for fitting dresses. The laundry is in almost constant use. It contains three



FIG. 1. THE DIET LABORATORY

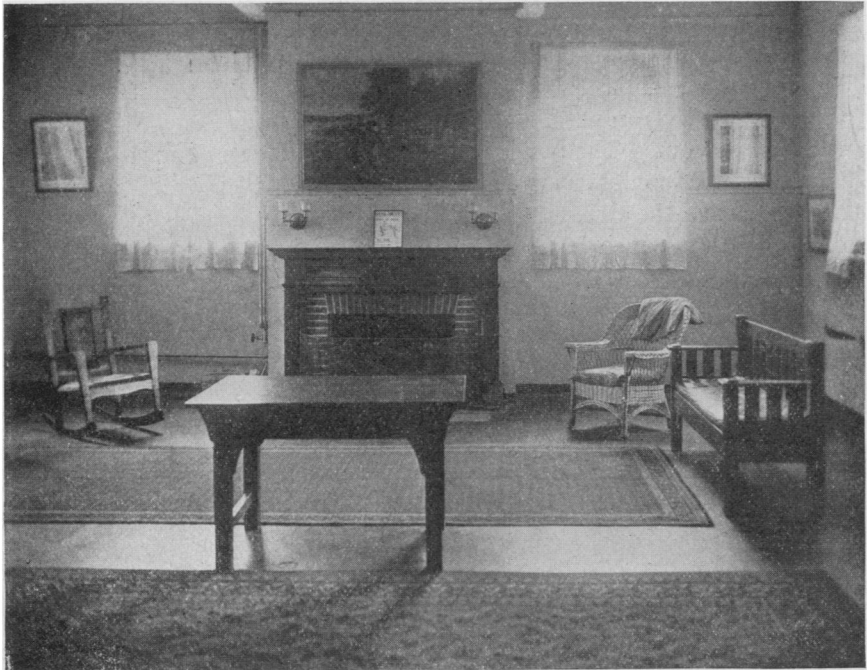


FIG. 2. RECREATION ROOM IN BASEMENT, OUT OF WHICH THE KITCHENETTE OPENS

set tubs, two ironing boards, electric irons, and a drying closet. As there is a rule that shoe blacking may not be used in the rooms, a shoe tree has been provided in the laundry for that purpose. The most popular room of all is the recreation room, a glimpse of which is seen in Fig. 2. The most important part, which does not appear in the picture, is the kitchenette, which has a good gas stove, an ice chest, and sufficient dishes, pots and pans, so that many an attractive Sunday morning breakfast or Sunday night supper has been served in front of that comfortable open fire. Fudge parties, too, there have been, and many more festivities than I have time to enumerate.

On opening the front door, because, although the home is joined to the hospital there is a separate front entrance which gives on the street, one walks into the hall which you see in Fig. 3. The clock is the gift of one class, the pedestal on which the palm stands, of another, and two chairs which do not appear in the picture, of still another. On the left of the front door is a small office which contains a telephone, a bulletin board, and spread out on a table are such packages and mail as come addressed to the house. Mail addressed to the hospital, is put into the nurse's own postoffice box at the front office and is kept there until she calls for it.

Directly in front of the front door and running almost the whole length of the house is the living room. Fig. 5 shows about two-thirds of its length. At either end are a fireplace and book shelves. In the middle of the room is a large center table with a long, deep sofa drawn up against it. By the windows are many small tables, fitted up with ink, pens and blotters. The alcoves on either side of the entrance are cosy little retreats wherein to receive guests. Thus it is possible for several separate groups to entertain at the same time, and it is not necessary for nurses to abandon the room when others have callers. It is no uncommon occurrence to find a group of nurses around the victrola and center table, absolutely oblivious of the various groups who are entertaining in the alcoves or in the other parts of the room. This room is also well suited for an occasional dance or for the alumnae association meetings.

On the first floor there are two suites, bedroom, sitting-room and bath, for the superintendent of nurses and the dietitian. There is also a guest room with adjoining bath. The nurses' rooms are mainly on the second, third and fourth floors, although there are some on the first. The rooms are all single, have good closets and are well heated. Each room is furnished with a bed, a bureau, two chairs, one straight and one rocker, a table, and a combination desk and book-case which is attached to the wall (Fig. 4). Notice the low moulding which is espe-

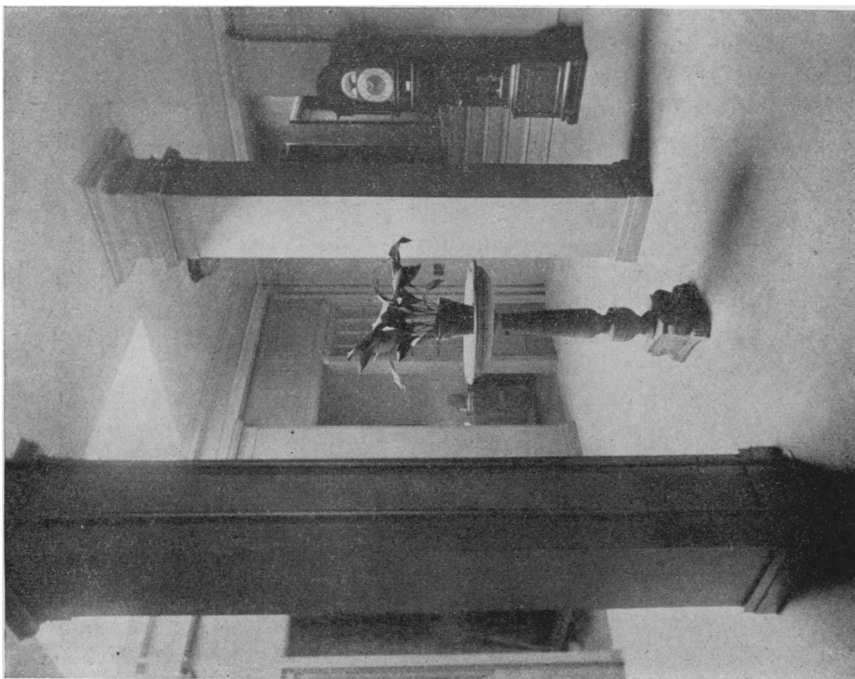


FIG. 3. ENTRANCE HALL. ENTRANCE FROM STREET AT LEFT,
ENTRANCE TO OFFICE RIGHT OF FRONT ENTRANCE

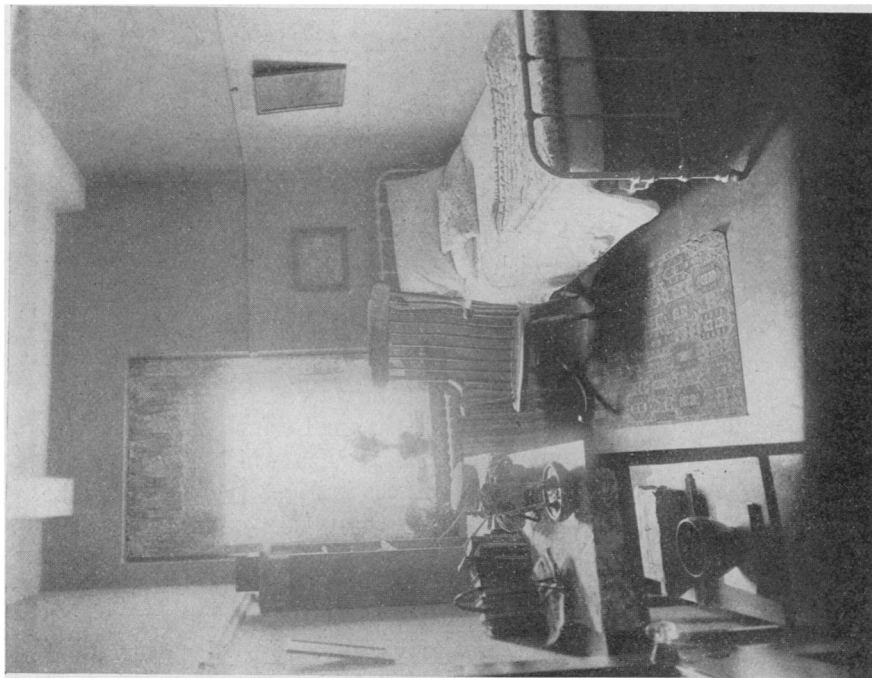


FIG. 4. NURSE'S BEDROOM

cially adapted for hanging small pictures; the kind which most nurses are likely to have. The walls are of a tinted plaster, those on the second floor are colored brown; on the third, grey; and on the first and fourth, green. The walls make a good background and the rooms with a few simple touches soon assume a homelike appearance. A glass transom over the door assists in giving adequate ventilation. The lighting is electric and mainly overhead, although each room has a drop light. In some rooms the light is rather dim. An improvement on the overhead lighting system is yet to be found.



FIG. 5. THE LIVING ROOM

On each floor are a linen room, broom closet, and slop-sink closet. There are also two alcoves on each floor which can be used as sitting rooms. That adjoining the room of the nurse instructor she uses as her study. The others, in times of congestion, can be turned into extra rooms by placing a cot, a wardrobe, etc., in them. The bathing facilities are ample, as there are six bathtubs and eight set bowls to a floor of twenty-nine rooms. In planning a new building, a shower bath to each floor and a separate sink in each lavatory for brushing teeth would

be a good addition. On the second floor, the supervisors have a bathroom of their own and also their own sitting room.

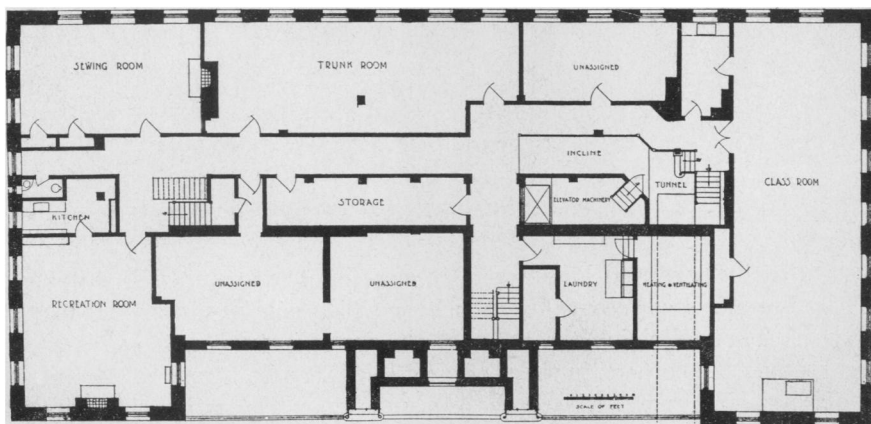
One of the most popular parts of the building, especially in the summer time, is the roof. Here, covered by an awning, four Gloucester hammocks are swung and a number of the nurses have cots and sleep out when the weather permits.

The building is fireproof throughout. The stairways on either side are enclosed by wire-glass partitions which separate them from the rest of the house.

For those interested in construction I quote from Doctor Washburn, the administrator of the hospital:

The floors are made of reinforced concrete with German battleship linoleum cemented to the surface. The exceptions to this finish are, that in the living room is a quartered oak floor, and in the entrance hall, Italian marble, and in the toilet and bathrooms, terrazzo. There is an electric elevator operated by push buttons. The building is designed structurally to receive an additional story at some future time. To provide for this the fifth floor slab has been laid. The present roof is of light steel and cinder concrete construction, strutted up from this fifth floor concrete slab. Everything is so arranged that the fifth story can be added without making any change below the floor slab.

The house is quiet, except for street noises which cannot be avoided. The nurses have separate rooms and good closets, a living room in which to entertain their friends, the roof and recreation room in which to relax. Surely, you will agree with me that we have some of the essentials of a home-like house.



PLAN OF BASEMENT FLOOR